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Cara Wallis
Texas A&M University
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Performing Gender: A Content Analysis of Gender Display in Music Videos

Cara Wallis

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Abstract This study investigated differences in gender display by male and female performers in music videos. Goffman's (1976) conceptual framework of gender display was refined and expanded upon as a basis for analyzing 12 nonverbal displays associated with subordination, domination, sexuality, and aggression in music videos by an equal number of male and female lead performers. 34 music videos on U.S. cable stations MTV and MTV2 were divided into 30-second segments, resulting in 253 units that were coded for gender display. Findings revealed that significant gender displays primarily reinforced stereotypical notions of women as sexual objects, and to a lesser degree, females as subordinate and males as aggressive. Implications of music videos' portrayal of stereotypical gender displays and their role in the construction and maintenance of the gender status quo are discussed.

Keywords Gender display · Music videos · Sex stereotypes

Introduction

Music videos are an important part of a hugely profitable and ubiquitous music industry, with over 10 U.S.-based cable stations offering some sort of music video programming and countless sites on the World Wide Web allowing for music video viewing and downloading (Grebb 2006). MTV—the network responsible for launching music videos into the mainstream in 1981—has numerous U.S. cable TV channels as well as networks in over 20 countries around the world that broadcast a mixture of local and western (primarily American and British) music in addition to other entertainment programming (Jones 2005). It is estimated that U.S. adolescents and young adults watch an average of between 30 min and 3 hr of music videos per day (Roberts and Christenson 2001; Ward et al. 2005).

Since emerging in the mainstream in the early eighties, the music video format has generated a fair amount of scholarly attention, with research focusing especially on the harmful imagery found in many music videos and the potential effects of such imagery on youth audiences (Gan et al. 1997; Hansen and Hansen 1990; Kaloff 1999; Seidman 1992; Sherman and Dominick 1986; Smith and Boyson 2002). Early content analyses of music videos consistently revealed a proliferation of stereotypical gender roles, particularly as these pertained to negative images of women and women as sex objects (Baxter et al. 1985; Brown and Campbell 1986; Sherman and Dominick 1986; Vincent et al. 1987). Many studies also focused on violence in music videos, finding that males, compared to females, were more likely to be aggressors as well as victims of violence (Baxter et al. 1985; Kalis and Neuendorf 1989; Sherman and Dominick 1986; Vincent et al. 1987). Research in the early nineties reached similar conclusions (Seidman 1992; Sommers-Flanagan et al. 1993; Tapper et al. 1994).

Although there is evidence that the most popular music videos do not have as much sex and violence as is commonly assumed (Gow 1990), and though certain music videos of particular artists have been praised for promoting positive messages, such as images of female empowerment, most have been labeled as crass manipulations of youth for presenting fantasies of hedonistic pleasure or gratuitous violence (American Academy of Pediatrics 1996; Emerson

C. Wallis (✉)
Department of Communication, Texas A&M University,
4234 TAMU,
College Station, TX 77843-4234, USA
e-mail: cwallis@tamu.edu

2002; Jhally 1990, 1995; Lewis 1990). Particularly harsh criticism has been leveled at MTV for catering to male adolescents in its portrayal of gender stereotypes, particularly those that denigrate women (Seidman 1992; Vincent et al. 1987) or portray leading females in a narrow range of roles (Gow 1996).

Despite what seem to be similar conclusions regarding the content of music videos, there has been continued scholarly interest in this topic (Beebe and Middleton 2007; Emerson 2002; Railton and Watson 2005; Smith and Boyson 2002; Ward et al. 2005; Zhang et al. 2008). Such attention can be attributed to at least two very different phenomena. First, several scholars have found music video to be a format that still warrants investigation in part because of the increasingly sexualized nature of a variety of forms of American popular culture as well as the persistence of gender and racial stereotypes in music videos despite changes in society that have raised the status of women and ethnic minorities (Emerson 2002; Railton and Watson 2005; Ward 2003). Second, music videos are now increasingly available, and potentially more pervasive, both in the U.S. and abroad, due to the ubiquity of music videos on websites such as YouTube and multiple viewing platforms, including mobile phones, portable digital video/music players, and computers.

This study is a content analysis that attempts to update (though not replicate) earlier content analyses of music videos through analyzing gender display in music videos aired on MTV and MTV2, two of the most dominant outlets for broadcasting rock, pop, and hip-hop music videos to youth audiences (Grebb 2006). This research examines the extent to which male and female lead performers in music videos adhere to conventional nonverbal gendered behaviors. The research design drew on Goffman's (1976) notion of gender display and subsequent research (Allan and Coltrane 1996; Kang 1997) that has expanded upon his work as well as prior content analyses of music videos. For this analysis, a group of gender displays involving hand gestures, body movement, facial expressions, and clothing were selected for coding in a sample of 34 music videos. Differences in such displays based on the gender of the lead performer in the video were expected.

Music video production is viewed by artists and record labels as part of their marketing strategy, and marketing research has consistently shown that heavy rotation of an artist's music video is associated with higher record sales for that artist (Hay 1998; Leeds 2002). Because music videos are not only a form of entertainment, but also a means of advertising, ultimately created to sell a product, their images are intended to be especially powerful and captivating (Jhally 1990, 1995; Kaplan 1987). Cummins (2007) notes that the inclusion of sexual content in music videos is an important marketing tool.

As part of the broad palette of media available to youth, music videos contribute to the media's role in gender socialization, a process whereby the media provide acceptable notions and models of masculinity and femininity, which can be observed, reflected upon, and imitated (Aubrey et al. 2003; Gamson et al. 1992; Morgan 1987; Ward 2003). Though positive gender images—those that show men and women in diverse occupations and as whole individuals rather than sex objects or perpetrators of violence—are certainly found in the media, scholars from a range of theoretical and methodological perspectives have argued persuasively that the ubiquity of stereotypical and highly sexualized gender images in the media, including music videos, can have negative consequences for the mental, emotional, and sexual health of youth, especially adolescent girls and young women (American Psychological Association, Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls 2007; Bordo 1993; Pardun et al. 2005; Ward 2002). Exposure to sexualized images in music videos in particular has been associated with greater acceptance of adversarial sexual beliefs among young men and women (Kaloff 1999) and more tolerance toward sexual harassment on the part of some female adolescents (Strouse et al. 1994).

The Importance of Gender Display and Nonverbal Behavior

Media of all kinds proliferate depictions of gender, and one way to analyze such mediated representations is to employ the theoretical construct of gender display. Gender displays, part of the larger realm of nonverbal behavior, are the "tertiary sexual characteristics (that are) learned and socially created" (Mayo and Henley 1981, p. 3). Goffman (1976) specifically defines gender displays as the "conventionalized portrayals" of the "culturally established correlates of sex" (p. 1). Gender displays can be thought of as codes that distinguish the way men and women participate in social situations, and they tend to be viewed as natural by both the performer and the recipient. Such depictions of masculinity and femininity are socially acquired, patterned, used, and understood in relationship to others. As Goffman notes, "One might just as well say there is no gender identity. There is only a schedule for the portrayal of gender. . . .What, if anything, characterizes persons as sex-class members is their competence and willingness to sustain an appropriate schedule of displays" (p. 8). To Goffman, our gendered behavior, as well as our concepts of masculinity and femininity, are scripts that are dictated by our environment that we consciously and unconsciously learn and perform in order to play our appropriate roles in society.

Gender display, as an aspect of nonverbal behavior, includes touch, facial expressions, eye contact, gestures,

and posture. Nonverbal behavior is tremendously important, yet because nonverbal elements are generally out of conscious awareness, they usually go unnoticed unless extremely exaggerated or in violation of behavioral norms. However, the strength of nonverbal behavior can be seen in the fact that when the nonverbal contradicts the verbal, usually the former is believed (Giles and Le Poire 2006).

Nonverbal behavior is also said to encode power relations (Bordo 1993; Burgoon and Dillman 1995; Mayo and Henley 1981). Many empirical studies have associated power with more use of hand gestures, touching others, and sustained gazing, and have found that men engage in such behaviors more than women (Burgoon and Le Poire 1999; Henley 1995; Major et al. 1990). Self-touch, however, has been correlated with lower status and as such is more often associated with women (Carney et al. 2001; Harrigan et al. 1991). Just as there is contradictory evidence as to whether lower-status individuals smile more than those with higher status (Hecht and LaFrance 1998), some studies have found that females smile more than males (Deutsch, as cited in Henley 1995; Hall et al. 2000; LaFrance and Mayo 1978). However, others have yielded no significant results (Carney et al. 2001). In a meta-analysis of 162 studies, La France et al. (2003) found that women smiled more than men but that characteristics including age and nationality as well as situational context influenced such behavior.

In general, it has been surmised that a woman who demonstrates masculine nonverbal behavior may be considered offensive because she threatens power relations, yet a man who acts feminine may be seen as merely idiosyncratic (Mayo and Henley 1981). As summarized by Henley (1995), there is fairly consistent empirical support for "the hypothesis that men's nonverbal behavior tends to parallel the behavior associated with dominance and power, whereas women's tends to parallel the behavior of the subordinate and powerless" (p. 40). Such implications of nonverbal behavior in the real-world behaviors of males and females also are relevant when examining gender display in the media.

Gender Display in the Media

Numerous studies have focused on stereotypical portrayals of men and women in the media, and television in particular has been blamed for creating false expectations of beauty and body shape (Children Now 1996–2003; Want et al. 2009), objectifying women (Signorielli 1989; Ward 2003), and allotting more diverse roles to men compared to women (Bretl and Cantor 1988; Davis 1990; Signorielli 2009). However, a smaller body of research has specifically utilized the concept of gender display to analyze the portrayal of males and females in various forms of media, especially magazines and television commercials (Allan and Coltrane 1996; Belknap and Leonard 1991; Kang 1997). These studies can be traced to Goffman's (1976) landmark investigation of the power of visual images in disseminating nonverbal messages about gender. In his analysis of nearly 400 advertisements for gender-relevant behavior, or "genderisms," Goffman classified men and women's portrayals in five ways. In the first, relative size, he noted that men were almost always taller than women, presumably to represent their superior social rank. In the second category, feminine touch, he found images of women who were pictured touching themselves to convey a sense of the female body as precious and fragile. In the third category, function ranking, males in the ads had an occupational or active role while women usually did not. For the fourth category, Goffman found several examples of what he saw as women performing "the ritualization of subordination," including lowering the body in deference, a "bashful knee bend," and "canting," or lowering the head to show submission. In the fifth and final category, licensed withdrawal, he observed women portrayed more often than men as removed psychologically (and thus in need of the protection or goodwill of others). This category included such gestures as covering the mouth to hide losing control of ones' emotions (when afraid, for example), a finger to the mouth to show anxiety or contemplation, averting one's gaze or head to show submission, and numerous poses to indicate withdrawal from the social situation at hand. Goffman concluded that overall women were presented as precious or fragile, passive, submissive, and in need of the protection or goodwill of others.

Goffman's method has been criticized, mostly for what has been perceived as a lack of methodological rigor. For example, Goffman did not choose a random sample of ads in order to conduct his content analysis, and his categories are not mutually exclusive (Smith 1996). To Cioffi (2000), he is merely "stating the obvious" (p. 97). Another criticism is that gender display as a concept does not get at the depth to which people "do" gender in everyday interactions (West and Zimmerman 1991). Still, Goffman's work has been extremely influential and has been adapted to address these criticisms. Belknap and Leonard (1991) extended Goffman's categories to analyze men's and women's magazines. They found that the prevalence of "genderisms," particularly feminine touch and the ritualization of subordination, seemed to be greater in so-called modern magazines than traditional ones. Relative size and function ranking were found less frequently. Kang (1997) compared a random sample of ads in women's magazines in the early nineties as a means of conceptually replicating Goffman's study. She used Goffman's categories as well as two additional ones and, like Belknap and Leonard, found infrequent instances of relative size and function ranking. However, there were more stereotypical portrayals of female body display and licensed withdrawal than in Goffman's study.

Other research has analyzed gender display in television commercials. Comparing commercials from the "classic" era and from the 1980s, Allan and Coltrane (1996) found gender stereotypes still at work, often with little change between the two periods, particularly in terms of the number of men compared to women and the voice of narrators. They also noted an increase in nontypical gender display of nearly 28% for women (e.g. women demonstrating "masculine" traits) but a decrease by 9% for men. Allan and Coltrane concluded, "Much of what we do with gender display in social interaction is 'boundary work:' we create and reaffirm group boundaries and construct differences between males and females" (p. 201). In other comparisons of commercials over time, larger degrees of gender bias and stereotypes have been found in more recent commercials than in earlier ones, indicating that television commercials may have actually regressed in terms of gender neutrality (Bartsch et al. 2000; Ganahl et al. 2003).

Such research suggests that the concept of gender display is a useful framework for analyzing gender representations in various types of media, particularly when the research focus is on nonverbal behavior. Aware of the critiques of Goffman, Smith (1996) sees potential for systematizing and extending Goffman's analytic framework. Among his recommendations are that Goffman's categories should be made mutually exclusive, and that as analytic categories they need to be operationalized in order to be more effective. He also discusses the need for new types of "genderisms." These suggestions will be addressed in the current study, which investigates the nonverbal correlates of gender in music videos, a topic that has been understudied in music video research.

Overview of the Study

Though prior research offers persuasive findings regarding women's subordinate status and men's dominant status in media depictions in general, this study seeks to remedy certain limitations in some of the previous analyses of gender representations in music videos and to offer a unique perspective through focusing specifically on gender display. First, in several studies (Seidman 1992; Sherman and Dominick 1986; Vincent et al. 1987) only concept videos, in which a performer plays a role in the "story" of the video, were analyzed to the exclusion of performance videos, or videos that portray the artist simply performing the song. It is true that more is usually "happening" in concept videos in the sense that lead performers can take on an array of different behaviors, costumes, and roles while acting in the video. However, it seems likely that an exclusion of performance videos might skew the research results, and studies that only take into account concept videos while claiming to measure what is in music videos may not be presenting the whole picture. This study analyzes concept as well as performance videos because gender display, which is an often unconscious correlate of masculinity and femininity, should be prevalent in both types of videos.

Second, in a number of the prior content analyses that investigated sexuality or gender in music videos, the whole video was used as the coding unit so that behaviors and characteristics of performers were only coded once (e.g. Baxter et al. 1985; Seidman 1992; Tapper et al. 1994; Vincent et al. 1987). However, because most music videos are three to four minutes in length, it is very likely that certain behaviors will be repeated during the course of the video. Only coding a particular behavior or gesture one time allows for the potential misrepresentation of what is happening in music videos. This study therefore divided each video into 30-second units to be coded in order to capture a more complete picture of gender display.

The third and perhaps most significant reason to look once again at the content of music videos is that although prior music video research has focused on sex-role stereotyping, none have performed a comprehensive analysis of gender displays of male and female performers in the videos in the manner of Goffman's original study of print ads or in the mode in which Smith (1996) suggests Goffman's categories can be expanded and operationalized. Analyzing displays "of" the body such as hand gestures and facial expressions as well as displays "on" the body including clothing may shed more light on constructs of femininity and masculinity in music videos.

Finally, given societal changes since much of the previous music video research was conducted, there is reason to believe the gendered content of music videos is in need of a fresh assessment. Some recent summaries and meta-analyses of a large body of research on gender suggest that there may be more similarities than differences in the thinking and behavior of men and women (Barnett and Rivers 2004; Hyde 2005). Certain trends in popular culture and in the music industry itself in recent years, such as "emo" (emotional) rock, "riot grrrls," and "girl power," purport notions of gender equality and broadened ideas of acceptable forms of masculinity and femininity (Banet-Weiser 2004; Leonard 1997; Whitely 2000). On the other hand, some have argued that postfeminist notions of gender equality and female empowerment have meant that women have become even more sexualized and objectified in the media (Levy 2005; McRobbie 2004). Others believe that as the overall status of women continues to increase in society, the result will be less stereotyped gender representations of men and women disseminated in popular culture (Gauntlett 2002). However, as the research cited above indicates, this does not seem to be the case with television commercials or magazine ads, so there is no reason to automatically assume this is true in music videos. All of these trends give cause for a reexamination of male

and female representations in music videos through utilizing gender display as a theoretical framework.

Research Question and Hypotheses

An analysis of gender display in music videos is relevant, both for theoretical and sociological reasons, as it potentially serves to further knowledge of the media's role in the social construction of gender. Though humans become "gendered" through multiple complex processes that are both conscious and unconscious, the media representations that are absorbed (consciously and unconsciously), reflected upon, and imitated play a key role (Aubrey et al. 2003; Gamson et al. 1992; Morgan 1987; Ward 2003). Modeling and imitation can be vicariously reinforced through seeing others—particularly role models in various media—rewarded for what is considered correct behavior, including gender appropriate behavior (Bandura 1986; Bussey and Bandura 1999). For youth, popular music artists are often viewed as role models (Raviv et al. 1996), and music videos have been shown to affect adolescents' conceptions of acceptable sexual behavior and gender stereotypes (Hansen and Hansen 1988; Strouse et al. 1995; Ward et al. 2005; Zhang et al. 2008). Their increasing availability through a variety of platforms (Internet, mobile phone, iPod) means that their images and messages are potentially more widespread than ever before (Caramanica 2005). Although claims of direct effects of the media on people's gender attitudes and behavior are highly contentious, we know that there is at least *some* influence (Gan et al. 1997; Hansen and Hansen 2000); hence, revisiting the topic of the content of music videos is worthwhile. As Seidman (1992) notes, "Music videos not only appear to reflect society and its norms, but may also help socialize young people by communicating ideas about proper behavior … as well as influencing males and females to develop distinct personality characteristics" (p. 209).

This research investigates the representations of males and females and the nonverbal behaviors that are associated with masculinity and femininity in current music videos. The research question guiding this study is, what are the gender displays of male and female lead performers in their music videos and how do they differ from one another? The answer could reveal much about the often subtle (or not so subtle) construction of gender in music videos.

Much of the literature on nonverbal communication and gender display summarized earlier links certain nonverbal behaviors with power (Burgoon and Dillman 1995; Goffman 1976; Henley 1995). Prior content analyses of television commercials and music videos have shown men and women in hierarchical positions, with men displaying more dominance compared to women (Allan and Coltrane 1996; Seidman 1992; Sommers-Flanagan et al. 1993). Because previous research has also found that televisual portrayals of gender often lag behind more progressive notions of gender equality in real life (Ganahl et al. 2003), the first two hypotheses in this study are:

H_1: Female lead performers will display more subordinate nonverbal behavior than will male lead performers.

H_2: Male lead performers will display more dominant modes of nonverbal behavior than will female lead performers.

Because much of the research on music videos and television commercials has shown high degrees of sexuality associated with women (Brown and Campbell 1986; Rouner et al. 2003; Seidman 1992) and in the case of music videos, high degrees of aggression associated with men (Kalis and Neuendorf 1989; Vincent 1989), the third and fourth hypotheses in this study are:

H_3: Female lead performers will display more overt sexuality than will male lead performers in terms of suggestive gestures, facial expressions, and attire.

H_4: Male lead performers will engage in more nonverbal displays of aggression than will female lead performers.

In general, it is hypothesized that despite changes in society and in popular culture, male and female lead performers will demonstrate stereotypical gender displays in their music videos.

Method

Design

This study examined gender display of male and female lead performers in a sample of concept and performance music videos aired on MTV and MTV2. These networks were chosen as popular television outlets for airing rock, pop, and hip-hop videos to a large audience. More than 86 million households subscribe to MTV alone (MTV Networks International 2004). In 2004 MTV had been the number-one rated 24-hour ad-supported cable network among 12-to-24-year-olds for 31 consecutive quarters while MTV2 was also extremely popular among adolescents and young adults and reached over 45 million households (MTV Networks International).

A content-analytic scheme was developed based on gender-stereotypic nonverbal displays in accordance with Goffman's categories and Smith's (1996) suggestion to use mutually exclusive "genderisms." The prior findings on gender representation in television commercials and music videos discussed earlier were also considered in developing the content-analytic scheme. As elaborated in more detail

below, gender displays initially chosen for the analysis included hand gestures, body movement, and facial expressions. Clothing, a gender-stereotypic nonverbal display adorning the body, was also included.

Video Selection

Music videos were selected using a purposive sampling strategy. The goal was to generate a broad sample of pop, rock, and rap music videos popular at the time and that contained sufficient representations of males and females for meaningful comparisons. An equal number of videos by male and female lead performers was desired in order to run a MANOVA as a discriminant analysis, a test that requires equal cell sizes to be robust to the assumption of multivariate normality.

Thirty hours of MTV and 10 hr of MTV2 were videotaped for three weeks during late October 2004 and early November 2004. Videotaping was done on alternating days during rotating three-hour blocks between 5:00 am and 11:00 am, considered "prime time" for music videos because most MTV daytime programming is increasingly devoted to talk shows, game shows, and reality shows. During the sampling period, it became clear that MTV broadcast an overwhelming number of videos with male lead performers, so additional recording of MTV2 was done during the last week of the taping period. This taping added only three additional music videos to the sample. This limited number and the fact that only 82 unique videos aired throughout the taping period suggests that the taping captured the videos in rotation at the time. The taped videos were also assumed to be representative of a broader time period because there is no available evidence that indicates that seasonal changes influence the types of videos shown; rather, a given video's amount of rotation is strongly linked to its song's sales volume (and vice versa). It should be noted that all of the videos analyzed in this study were also available on MTV's website and thus potentially accessible to a much larger audience both domestically and internationally at any time. In addition, some of the videos were featured on its home page as well as on Total Request Live (TRL), a popular show at the time of taping.

The 40 hr of taping yielded a sample of 65 unique videos of male performers and 17 unique videos of female performers. In line with previous content analyses (e.g., Sherman and Dominick 1986; Sommers-Flanagan et al. 1993), repeated videos were eliminated. To obtain an equal number of videos by males and females, the 65 male videos were numbered and a sample of 17 videos was selected by drawing 17 two-digit numbers from a random numbers table. The final total number of videos coded was 34. For ease and comprehensiveness of coding, each video was divided into units of 30 s, with the average video containing 7.5 units for a total of 253 units. A time display was put on each video to facilitate coding.

Measure

Gender

In this study, sex was assumed to affect gender display. Sex was operationalized as the physical presence of a male or female lead performer in each music video. Given the findings on sexism and gender stereotypes in prior content analyses of music videos and concerns about the proliferation of such images, the focus of this study was also on gender, but gender display was utilized as an unexplored framework in music video research. Because the emphasis was gender display, the race of the artist and the style of music were not considered in the analysis.

Nonverbal Behaviors

After a process of refining variables, as described in more detail below, 12 gender displays were chosen to be coded. Six hand gestures, two body movement displays, and three facial expressions were selected for coding, as was clothing of the lead performer.

Procedures

Development of Coding Scheme

This study focused on gender displays of the lead performer of each video. A lead performer was operationalized as the lead singer of the song in the video; in other words, the person who both sang the lead vocal and appeared in the foreground of the video. Other band members, background singers, and supporting dancers and actors were ignored. The rationale for this design was that the lead performer in a music video is the one who is crucial to the performance or the central concept being depicted and as such should receive most of the viewer's attention (Brown and Campbell 1986; Vernallis 2004).

Before coding the videos, previous content analyses of music videos were scrutinized, in particular Seidman (1992) and Sommers-Flanagan et al. (1993), for operationalizations of gender roles, nonverbal expressions of sexuality, and physical aggression in music videos. Goffman's (1976) original analysis of gender display and subsequent studies based on his analytic categories were reviewed as were studies of nonverbal gender displays and nonverbal communication as a function of gender in order to make a preliminary list of gender displays (Belknap and Leonard 1991; Carney et al. 2001; Goffman 1976; Kang 1997; Signorielli et al. 1994). In the preliminary coding scheme, subordinate nonverbal gender displays included touching

hair, delicate self-touch, smiling, averting one's eyes, and a childish finger to/in the mouth. Nonverbal gender displays expressing overt sexuality included sexual self-touch, suggestive dancing, a sultry look, and wearing slightly provocative or provocative clothing. These subordinate and sexual gender displays were meant to address Goffman's categories of feminine touch, ritualization of subordination, and licensed withdrawal and Kang's concept of female body display. In the preliminary coding scheme, gender displays conveying dominance included several posture and eye contact displays, and nonverbal displays signifying aggression included flinging hands/fingers, showing force, aggressive playing of an instrument, and showing passion while singing. Because previous studies found Goffman's relative size and function ranking to be insignificant, these were not included. A sample of videos was then viewed and the categories refined.

Coders

Two coders (both white females in their early twenties) were trained for several hours in the use of the coding scheme with music videos that were not included in the study sample. The coders watched each video numerous times and coded each 30-second unit of each video for presence (1) or absence (0) of the nonverbal behaviors. In addition, clothing of each performer was coded once for each outfit the performer wore in the video. Clothing was coded as neutral, slightly provocative (clothing that reveals more of the chest, abdomen, or the thighs than in everyday work/school attire), or provocative (revealing most of the body). Coders made their decisions independent of one another. Intercoder agreement was determined by using Cohen's kappa, which was calculated using SPSS. During the training process, variables in the preliminary design dealing with eye contact and posture were discarded due to a lack of intercoder reliability. The intercoder reliability coefficient for each retained variable was: flinging hands/fingers (.8), show of force (.8), touching hair (.8), delicate self-touch (.7), suggestive dancing (.9), smiling (.9), passionate singing (1.0), neutral clothing (1.0), slightly provocative clothing (.8), and provocative clothing (.8). Although the coders were in perfect agreement as to the presence or absence of childish finger to/in the mouth, sexual self-touch, aggressive playing, and a sultry look across all segments and across all videos, there was no variability in the presence/absence data—for example, both raters agreed on one instance of aggressive playing—such that both of the variables were constants, and kappa could not be computed.

Results

A set of analyses was constructed to answer the general research question: what are the gender displays of male and female lead performers in their music videos and how do they differ from one another? This set of analyses was also designed to test the four hypotheses: Hypothesis 1, that female lead performers will display more subordinate nonverbal behavior than will male lead performers; Hypothesis 2, that male lead performers will display more dominant modes of nonverbal behavior than will female lead performers; Hypothesis 3, that female lead performers will display more overt sexuality than will male lead performers; and Hypothesis 4, that male lead performers will engage in more nonverbal displays of aggression than will female lead performers.

Research Question: Gender Displays and Differences

The research question asks about the gender displays of male and female lead performers in their music videos and assumes differences in such displays. Although the videos were coded for presence or absence of each gender display in each 30-second unit, to be able to apply parametric statistics to the analysis of the data, the coding units were collapsed to obtain a measure of the percentage of intervals in which each behavior was displayed. A discriminant analysis was then conducted to perform a multivariate-analysis of variance test of the general hypothesis that male musicians differed from female musicians on a linear combination of 11 types of nonverbal behavior (flinging hands/fingers, childish finger to/in the mouth, show of force, touching hair, delicate self-touch, sexual self-touch, suggestive dancing, aggressive playing of a musical instrument, smiling, sultry look, and passionate singing), such that males will have a significantly higher value on the combined indicators than females (type of clothing was not included). A discriminant analysis was chosen for theoretical reasons in that nonverbal behaviors seldom operate independently of one another; rather, they appear in clusters so it is appropriate to analyze them as a group (Burgoon and Bacue 2003). Methodologically a discriminant analysis takes into account the relationship that variables have with one another, and it reduces the possibility of generating a significant relationship by chance (Williams and Monge 2001).

The obtained value of Wilks' lambda, .355, was significant at $p=.004$ (Chi-square=27.458, $df=11$). The canonical correlation between the gender grouping variable and the new canonical variable composed of the 11 weighted predictors was .803. Significant univariate differences between males and females were also obtained for percent of touching hair, F (1, 32)=24.718, $p<.001$; delicate self-touch, F (1, 32)=18.313, $p<.001$; sultry look, F (1, 32)=14.08, $p=.001$; suggestive dancing, F (1,32)= 8.741, $p=.003$; sexual self-touch, F (1, 32)=5.384, $p=.014$; aggressive playing, F (1, 32)=4.392, $p=.022$; and flinging hands/fingers F (1, 32)=2.992, $p=.047$.

Table 1 shows the average of the percentage that each gender display occurred in each video by a male lead performer and each video by a female lead performer, where the length of the video was taken into consideration in the calculation. As shown in the table, the percentage mean for all displays was in the expected direction even when not significant. The variables with significant differences of the means of the percent of occurrence were: flinging hands/fingers, 51.33 for males and 30.48 for females; aggressive playing, 13.20 for males and .00 for females; touching hair, 1.24 for males and 38.35 for females; delicate self-touch, 5.78 for males and 37.14 for females; sultry look, .00 for males and 34.56 for females; suggestive dancing, .74 for males and 26.80 for females; and sexual self-touch, 2.69 for males and 15.57 for females.

Table 2 presents the standardized discriminant function coefficients. Higher scores on the discriminant function corresponded to higher rates of passionate singing, aggressive playing, flinging hands/fingers, and showing force, all variables associated with male gender display. The main anomaly was the positive coefficient for sexual self-touch because this display was assumed to be associated with female musicians. Lower scores corresponded to higher rates of childish finger to/in mouth, delicate self-touch, a sultry look, and touching hair, variables consistently associated with female gender display.

Table 3 displays the group centroids on the discriminant function; the female group had a low positive centroid with respect to the function and the male group had a high positive centroid with respect to the function.

Table 4 presents the results of the reclassification analysis, which shows that the discriminant function was successful in reclassifying 91.2% of the cases. Note that the discriminant function was more successful in classifying male performers than females. Gender display variables relating to female performers that were significant by univariate tests were not associated with the discriminant function in a consistent way, and some of the female performers who had higher scores on a certain variable may have been incorrectly classified as male.

Table 1 Averages of percentages of gender displays by sex of performer.

Gender display	Males	Females
Larger percentage mean for males		
Flinging hands/fingers*	51.33	30.48
Passionate singing	24.36	14.72
Aggressive playing*	13.20	.00
Showing force	5.10	2.96
Larger percentage mean for females		
Touching hair*	1.24	38.35
Delicate self-touch*	5.78	37.14
Sultry look*	.00	34.56
Suggestive dancing*	.74	26.80
Smiling	16.53	24.70
Sexual self-touch*	2.69	15.57
Childish finger to/in mouth	1.31	3.08

Significant differences between means ($\alpha < .05$) are marked with an asterisk. The figures in the two columns show the average of the percentage that each gender display occurred in each video by a male and female lead performer, taking the length of the video into consideration

Table 2 Standardized canonical discriminant function coefficients.

Gender display	Function 1
Sexual self-touch	.657
Passionate singing	.400
Aggressive playing	.278
Smiling	.247
Flinging hands/fingers	.224
Showing force	.208
Suggestive dancing	.166
Childish finger to/in mouth	−.219
Delicate self-touch	−.373
Sultry look	−.712
Touching hair	−.772

Positive coefficients indicate displays that were associated with males whereas negative coefficients indicate displays that were associated with females. The positive coefficient for sexual self-touch is an anomaly

Hypothesis 1: Subordinate Nonverbal Behavior of Females

As indicated in the above discussion, the first hypothesis, that female lead performers would display more subordinate behaviors than males would, was partially confirmed. As shown in Table 1, female lead performers displayed more touching of hair and delicate self-touch. Although smiling and childish finger to/in the mouth were considered to be subordinate behaviors, the findings regarding both were not significant.

Table 3 Unstandardized canonical discriminant function evaluated at group means.

Gender of performer	Function 1
Male	1.308
Female	−1.308

The male group had a high positive centroid with respect to the function and the female group had a low positive centroid with respect to the function

Table 4 Classification results.

Gender of performer	Predicted group membership		Total
	Male	Female	
Male	17 (100%)	0	17
Female	3 (17.6%)	14 (82.4%)	17

91.2% of original cases were correctly classified. The discriminant function was more successful in classifying male performers than female performers

Hypothesis 2: Dominant Nonverbal Behavior of Males

The second hypothesis, that male lead performers would display more dominant nonverbal behavior was not confirmed. This resulted from the discarding of the variables associated with dominance during the training of the coders. Sufficiently high levels of reliability were not obtained for eye contact and posture, and consequently these variables were removed from the analysis.

Hypothesis 3: More Overt Sexuality Displayed by Females

The third hypothesis, that female performers would display more overt sexuality compared to males, was confirmed. As shown in Table 1, females engaged in significantly more sexual self-touch, suggestive dancing, and sultry looks. Independent one-directional t tests also showed that female lead performers wore neutral clothing much less often than males did, t (unequal variances)=4.14, df=16.411, p<.001. Females wore neutral clothing an average of 45.28% of the time while males averaged 98.09%. Females frequently wore slightly provocative clothing, t (unequal variances)=−4.12, df=16.401, p<.001, with a mean of 44.62% compared to a mean of 1.18% for males. Though not as common, females also wore provocative clothing more often than males, t (unequal variances)=−1.802, df=16.655, p=.045, with a mean of 10.09 for females and .735 for males.

Hypothesis 4: More Aggressive Displays by Males

The fourth hypothesis, that male lead performers would display more aggressive behaviors than females, was partially confirmed as males employed significantly more aggressive playing of instruments than females and engaged in significantly more flinging of fingers/hands. Results for passionate singing and show of force were not significant.

Discussion

This study drew upon Goffman's (1976) theoretical construct of gender display in order to analyze the nonverbal correlates of masculinity and femininity in music videos. The findings reveal that gender display is indeed a salient feature of music videos. As expected, there were differences in gender displays based on whether the lead performer of the video was male or female, and the gender displays that were significant reinforced stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity. To the extent that male and female artists perform a song in a video, they also perform gender.

The majority of the significant findings in this study were for gender displays that are constructed as overtly feminine. Female performers' displays of touching hair and delicate self-touch were consistent with Goffman's (1976) study of gender display in print advertisements, as well as with Belknap and Leonard's (1991) and Kang's (1997) findings regarding gender displays of feminine touch in magazines. They also align with previous studies of MTV that found women portrayed in a more submissive manner (Seidman 1992; Vincent et al. 1987). Such data reveal that despite women's gains in equality in the real world, and despite hopes for less stereotypical gender representations in popular culture, in the realm of music videos women are still depicted as more fragile and thus in need of the protection of men.

In contrast to some earlier studies (e.g., Sommers-Flanagan et al. 1993), male performers were not observed engaging in sexual behavior. It is interesting to note that such findings are consistent with the portrayal of males in video games according to a recent content analysis (Pieper et al. 2005). However, considering that three of the five significant displays for females (sexual self-touch, suggestive dancing, and sultry look) were of sexual behavior, the message given by and about women in these videos seems to be that sexually suggestive behavior is normal and appropriate for women but not necessarily for men. Images of female lead performers dancing suggestively or touching themselves in a sexual manner drive home the point that women are sexual objects, ready to be consumed by men. The clothing worn in the videos also communicates this message. Nearly all the male performers in the videos wore neutral clothing while provocative clothing was worn by the majority of women. This result differs from Vincent et al.'s (1987) finding, where the sex of the performer was not correlated with seductive dress, and it reveals an increase compared to Seidman's (1992) content analysis of music videos in which one third of females wore revealing attire. It also affirms numerous studies of television in general and television commercials in particular that have found that women are expected to be sexy while men do not have to meet such demands. The same complaint has been raised numerous times in relation to the music industry (Coates 1997; Leonard 2007).

In terms of aggressive behavior, males were significantly more likely to engage in aggressive playing of an instrument while no females manifested such behavior.

Males were also more likely than women to fling their fingers or hands in an aggressive manner. The message seems to be that just as women are expected to act sexually, males should engage in more typically masculine aggressive behavior. These findings are consistent with all of the music video research reviewed earlier.

Taken as a whole, this research has two main implications. The first is that the theoretical construct of gender display is a useful framework for analyzing mediated representations of masculinity and femininity. A focus on gender display helps reveal how gender is constructed nonverbally in the media. To return to Goffman, an analysis of gender display is a means of understanding how the "appropriate schedule of displays" is sustained. Nonverbal cues are often taken for granted and out of conscious awareness, yet bringing them to the forefront of investigation is an important task. The fact that gender displays, like all nonverbal behavior, are complex and interrelated, with several cues acting simultaneously rather than in isolation, means that their overall impression can be quite profound, particularly when they are presented as the norm and in a powerful medium such as a music video.

Though Goffman's (1976) categories served as the initial basis for this analysis, in the process of developing the coding scheme it became clear that only gender displays associated with what he termed "feminine touch" and "ritualization of subordination" should be operationalized. Furthermore, whereas those displays associated with "feminine touch" (touching hair and delicate self touch) were found to be significant in the analysis, this was not true of displays associated with the "ritualization of subordination" (smiling, childish finger to/in mouth). This finding suggests that in our current media environment, an analysis of gender display must place greater emphasis on those displays that express female sexuality. The corollary for males is found in displays that express aggression.

The second implication of this research is that analyzing gender display reveals the institutionalized sexism that persists in media representations. Overall, the findings regarding gender display in music videos communicate, once again, a distorted message as to females' "proper" role in society—as sexual and subordinate—and, to a lesser degree, males' "proper" role as well—as aggressive. Solely in terms of who is shown, the difficulty in obtaining an equal number of videos by male and female lead performers reveals the dominance of males on music television to a much larger degree than in previous content analyses of MTV (65 male videos compared to 17 female videos in 40 hr of videotaping).

These findings, unfortunately, are not surprising because music videos are a form of entertainment as well as a means of advertising, and numerous studies have found stereotyped gender behavior in both. At the same time, as more female performers have claimed equality with men and have sought to break down gender stereotypes in the music industry, the degree of stereotyped gender display in music videos raises concern as to the impact women have actually had in shifting this very gendered terrain. Although most musical artists do not produce their own music videos, in assuming a highly gendered identity, in performing gender, these artists are participating in the maintenance and production of the gender status quo. For the most part, they are not challenging the established gender order but are reproducing socially constructed gender hierarchies. If it is true that gender-deviant behavior is punished (Mayo and Henley 1981), then in such a highly commercialized realm as the music industry, when deviance could possibly mean the loss of a career, perhaps it is no wonder highly gendered behavior is consistently observed. Certainly there are artists going against the grain of gender stereotypes, but as this study reveals, they are in the minority.

This study suffers from some limitations, one of which was a relatively small sample size (34 videos). The design of the study required an equal number of videos by males and females, but this was difficult to achieve due to the predominance of videos on MTV and MTV2 by male lead performers. Also, though the study included a robust and varied set of videos, it was not a random sample. Another limitation was that neither the race of the performer nor the musical genre were considered in the analysis though clearly both can inform the content of music videos (Emerson 2002; Tapper et al. 1994). Furthermore, though a content analysis seems to be an objective measurement, it is limited by the fact that characteristics of observers can affect what they see. This is true in regards to both the categories selected by the researcher for coding as well as the subjectivity of the coders. The study obtained high indexes of reliability for the coding variables; however, certain variables had to be eliminated to achieve such reliability, resulting in fewer data. It also must be acknowledged that the raters were relatively homogeneous in terms of age, sex, education level, and socioeconomic status. Finally, any study of music videos is influenced by what is in rotation at a particular moment on a particular channel and in terms of the performer and the style of the song. For example, an artist who behaves aggressively in an up-tempo song may display more passive behavior in a slow song.

Although only slightly more than half of the gender displays in this study were found to be significant, all of the behaviors were in the predicted direction for gender behavior. Gender display can thus be a useful theoretical tool for analyzing gender representations in the media. Further research would benefit by exploring an expanded range of gender displays in a larger sample of videos and including the race/ethnicity of the performer and the genre of music in the

analysis. Given the role of mediated representations in the social construction of gender and the way music videos prime viewers' mental schemas (Hansen and Hansen 2000), these results could have important implications.

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